

Serial No.: 09/057,313
Attorney Docket No.: 033449-002
Amendment

13
Hand
selecting a plurality of containers adapted to contain and protect freight in a marine environment, each container having a set of outer walls defining an inner volume and having freight loaded therein;

providing a vehicle including a body portion and a gripping portion including a spreader attachment, said gripping portion being capable of being raised and lowered, rotated, and inclined relative to said body portion;

lifting a container by means of said vehicle;

causing said vehicle to travel over a ramp to or from a storage deck of a marine vessel, said ramp and storage deck having sufficient strength to support said vehicle when said vehicle is transporting a fully loaded one of said containers;

positioning said container at a desired location on a support surface or dock by means of said vehicle; and

repeating said lifting, causing and positioning steps for each of said plurality of containers.

Hand
35. (Amended) The method of claim 25 further comprising the steps of securing said containers to said support surface at said locations, and towing said marine vessel with said containers secured to said support surface thereof to a destination site.

Add the following new claims:

Hand
41. The method of claim 16 wherein said vehicle includes wheels which are configured to roll on a support surface when said vehicle is moved, and wherein said wheels of said vehicle are in contact with said support surface during said lifting and positioning steps.

42. The method of claim 16 wherein said lifting and positioning steps include moving said gripping portion relative to said body portion, and wherein said lifting and positioning steps are carried out without the use of any outrigger supports.

Serial No.: 09/057,313
Attorney Docket No.: 033449-002
Amendment

✓ 43. The method of claim 42 wherein said lifting and positioning steps include extending a boom of said vehicle.

✓ 44. The method of claim 16 wherein said vehicle does not include any outrigger supports.

113 ✓ 45. The method of claim 22 wherein said vehicle includes wheels which are configured to roll on a support surface when said vehicle is moved, and wherein said wheels are in contact with said support surface during said lifting and placing steps.

✓ 46. The method of claim 22 wherein said lifting and placing steps include moving said gripping portion relative to said body portion, and wherein said lifting and placing steps are carried out without the use of any outrigger supports.

✓ 47. The method of claim 46 wherein said lifting and placing steps include extending a boom of said vehicle.

✓ 48. The method of claim 22 wherein said vehicle does not include any outrigger supports.

✓ 49. The method of claim 25 wherein said vehicle includes wheels which are configured to roll on a support surface when said vehicle is moved, and wherein said wheels of said vehicle are in contact with said support surface during said lifting and positioning steps.

✓ 50. The method of claim 25 wherein said lifting and positioning steps include moving said gripping portion relative to said body portion, and wherein said lifting and positioning steps are carried out without the use of any outrigger supports.

Serial No.: 09/057,313
Attorney Docket No.: 033449-002
Amendment

✓ 51. The method of claim 50 wherein said lifting and positioning steps include extending a boom of said vehicle.

✓ 52. The method of claim 25 wherein said vehicle does not include any outrigger supports.

✓ 53. The method of claim 25 wherein said positioning step includes stacking said containers at least three containers high.

✓ 54. The method of claim 35 wherein said marine vessel includes a pointed bow to improve the efficiency of said towing step.

Remarks

New claims 41-54 have been added, and claims 25 and 35 have been amended. Marked-up copies of claims 25 and 35, illustrating the changes thereto, accompany this amendment. Review and reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Claims 16-19, 21-35 and 37-40 are rejected as allegedly defining obvious subject matter over U.S. Pat. No. 4,325,667 to Freeman in light of U.S. Pat. No. 3,691,595 to Backteman et al and U.S. Pat. No. 4,201,511 to Charles. This rejection is traversed for the reasons discussed below.

The Office action indicates that it relies upon the freight handling method disclosed at column 1, lines 20-38 of the Freeman reference as the basis for the rejection. This passage essentially discloses loading packaged and palletized sugar on a ship using forklift trucks. This passage also discloses that a forklift may move onto the ship and remove the palletized sugar to a dockside warehouse.

The Office action admits that the Freeman reference does not disclose: 1) a vehicle with a gripping portion including a spreader attachment, wherein the gripping portion is capable of